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SUBJECT: United States Policy Regarding Non-Recognition of the Soviet Zone Regime

This Mission has recently noted among important American officials and private citizens visiting Berlin an apparent lack of understanding of the U.S. policy of non-recognition of the Soviet Zone regime. Many visitors insistently query, "Why don't we recognize the GDR (German Democratic Republic)? After all, it has been in existence some time. It is a fact. We have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the Eastern European satellite states, likewise Communist regimes. Why don't we deal with the East German authorities to recover our boys like Lt. Mackin? The West Germans deal with the East Germans on a lot of matters, they and many other countries do business with East German officials. Why don't we recognize the GDR?"

In reply to such queries Mission officers have in general been making the following points:

1) The so-called German Democratic Republic is a communist puppet regime, established under Soviet military occupation in the Soviet Zone of Germany. Unlike the Federal Republic in West Germany, which was established by democratic processes and free elections, the GDR lacks popular consent. It would not last more than a few days if the 22 Soviet divisions were withdrawn from East Germany. In the past ten years around 2,500,000 Germans have fled from the Soviet Zone into West Germany. Between 80 and 90% of the remaining population in the Soviet Zone are opposed to the Communist regime and the Communist effort to make a separate state, the German Democratic Republic, out of the Soviet occupation zone. The majority of the East Germans, as well as the West Germans and Berliners, hope for the eventual reunification of Germany and the exercise of national self-determination with respect to their form of government and socio-economic system. These hopes are in large measure pinned to the steadfastness of U.S. policy.

2) Recognition of the so-called GDR would mean acceptance of a permanent division of Germany. This would be in direct contradiction to Allied pledges made to the German people at the end of the war concerning restoration of national German unity, and likewise would be in contradiction to the justified desires of the German people for reunification. It would undermine the work of those German political elements supporting inclusion of Germany in an integrated Europe. It would probably ultimately lead to the development in Germany of extreme nationalistic elements, since it cannot be assumed that

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the German people would ever in the long run acquiesce in this division.

3) The Soviets have been seeking in recent years formal acknowledgment by the West of the status quo in Central and Eastern Europe. To accept the status quo means to accept the expansion of Soviet power into the heart of Europe. Recognition of the GDR would give the Soviets the formal acknowledgment of the status quo that they have been seeking. It would mean the acceptance of Soviet power in Central and Eastern Europe on a permanent and legal basis.

The situation with respect to the GDR is quite different from that of the Eastern European satellite countries whom we do recognize. Our diplomatic relations with the satellite countries antedate the Communist regimes. Continuation of diplomatic relations has positive advantages to the United States. It does not condone the Communist regime and is not regarded as doing so by the satellite peoples. Moreover, despite boundary changes the satellite countries are whole countries, not a small part of a divided country like the GDR. Were the U.S. to recognize the GDR, however, it would be recognizing not a country, but the partition of a country.

Moreover, recognition of the GDR would have a damaging effect on the Eastern European satellites. It would signify acceptance by the West of the status quo, not only as regards East Germany but also for all the satellites -- would as it were "cork the bottle", thereby making a major contribution to the stability of the entire Soviet satellite system in Eastern Europe.

4) Most of those in the West who propose recognition are motivated by a desire for a solution which will lessen tensions in Central Europe and promote stability. Recognition of the GDR would not, however, lead to a permanent stability. Not only would there be bitterness among the Germans and a stimulation of German extremist national tendencies, but there would be an increase of insecurity among Western Europeans, who would clearly interpret recognition as a significant advance of Soviet power. Moreover, this gain would be likely to whet the appetite of the Soviets, leading them to pursue their expansionist objectives even more aggressively, with an attendant increased state of instability and tension. Specifically, the Soviets and the East German Communist regime have consistently reiterated that winning control over all Germany is an immediate objective. Recognition would help stabilize the Communist position in East Germany and facilitate the further use of the Soviet Zone as a springboard for a penetration of West Germany directed toward this objective.

5) West Germany deals with East Germany only in non-political matters such as post, railway, inland transport, trade, etc. These relations are carefully kept on a technical level only. They are maintained in the interest of the welfare of the German population, both East and West, and in an effort to preserve some semblance of unity in so far as is possible without compromising the liberties of the free Western part. The West Germans do not recognize the East German government as a legitimate authority. They have constantly opposed the recognition of the GDR by non-Soviet bloc states. The Federal Republic has stated that it will break off diplomatic relations with any

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country aside from the USSR, which recognizes the GDR. The Federal Republic broke its diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia when that country recognized the GDR in October 1957. No Western or non-Communist country has granted diplomatic recognition to the GDR, although many have commercial dealings.

6) The rights of the Western powers in Berlin, and their free access to Berlin, derive from the defeat of Nazi Germany. If the U.S. were to accept the Soviet turnover of their responsibilities to the GDR, if the U.S. were to deal with East German authorities in connection with the access of our armed forces to West Berlin, the U.S. would be permitting the Soviets to cancel a right acquired by American victory in World War II. Control by the East Germans would mean that the victor was submitting to control by the defeated.

Also the United States cannot deal with the East German authorities in such matters as the recovery of American servicemen. The U.S. holds the Soviet authorities responsible under the Huebner-Malinin Agreement for the return of American military personnel from the Soviet Zone. The Soviets are trying to shift their responsibility to the East German authorities. If we were to deal with the East German authorities in such cases, we would be accepting the Soviets' evasion of their responsibility. Moreover, any official U.S. contact with the East German authorities in such cases would be utilized by them in their efforts to claim de facto recognition; the East Germans even endeavor to interpret in such a way the mediation of the American Red Cross in the helicopter case last June.

7) The East German authorities have been stating consistently that the Western Allies no longer have a legal right to remain in West Berlin. Recognition of the GDR would make the presence of Allied forces in West Berlin depend upon the acquiescence of the GDR authorities. It would both legally and technically undermine the Western position in Berlin based, as it is, on a residual occupation regime. If we were to recognize the GDR we would have to accept as a corollary the withdrawal of Allied forces from West Berlin and the abandonment of the West Berliners, contrary to our solemnly pledged word.

* * * * *

The foregoing points, this Mission recognizes, do not represent a full statement on the U.S. policy of non-recognition but rather indicate the lines of argumentation which we here have used. In view of the recurrent nature of these queries and the concurrent need for a clear understanding of our policy in other posts, particularly at this time, the Department may wish to consider the issuance of a definitive statement similar to the excellent paper on our China policy transmitted under cover of the Department's Circular Airgram No. 1452, August 12, 1958. If such a statement could be unclassified, as was the statement on our policy regarding non-recognition of the Chinese

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Communist regime, it would be particularly useful.

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